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ABSTRACT

Secondary and higher education have at least who things in common with respect to career education. Assuming that students' career preparation is minimal, both must strive to compensate for this deficiency, and both levels sorely need faculty and staff inservice. At the secondary level alone there is a need to look at every student as having a career goal and as needing help with career planning. Career education implementation activities at the high school level include: career guidance and counseling, job information, career exploration opportunities, job preparation opportunities, cooperative education experiences, placement services, and realistic and relevant learning opportunities for dropouts. At the higher education level it is necessary to meet students' needs through innovative and flexible programing. A model for career education in higher education recently developed by the author and his students contains seven components: faculty-staff inservice, counseling and guidance, instructional program, field experience in the world of work, community involvement, placement services, and evaluation. Dealing with students as individuals who have stated and unstated career development needs is basic to program development in any institution. (Author/JR)

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CAREER EDUCATION IN SECONDARY AND HIGHER EDUCATION

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Career education might still suffer somewhat from the lack of a precise definition that satisfies many of its critics, but there seems to be general agreement that it is a program which seeks to serve people of all ages and is one which includes the complete spectrum of jobs for which people choose to prepare. In that light, education at the secondary and higher education levels must have an important role in career education. Those respective roles, however, appear to be emerging rather slowly.

In discussing career education at the secondary and higher education levels, there appears to be some advantage in treating each level separately. Although I shall do that in this presentation, there is some common ground which we might do well to consider first; factors in this common ground speak to elements in those roles.

Commonalities

In spite of all that has been said and done in career education over the past several years, and in spite of the fact that more than 5,000 school districts report career education implementation activities, it is safe to say that relatively few students are being reached in those programs. Those programs which have been implemented frequently include only part of the whole series of kindergarten through eighth grade learning experiences which career education would ideally provide for each student. Boys and girls, young men and young women, come to our high schools, colleges, and universities with many unmet needs. They come to us with certain levels of built-in frustration stemming from those unmet needs; and they often do not know where to go for help.

Ideally, our students would be aware of many careers, would have career goals relatively well thought out, and would be quite well-adjusted in terms of their self-concept. In reality, our students are in general frightfully unaware of occupational demands, requirements, and preparation opportunities; they are in great need of continued help with their own self-understanding. Of course, we could hasten to admit that the processes of becoming aware of careers, exploring careers, enhancing self-concept, and clarifying goals are all lifetime processes; but we must be concerned with a very elementary need in terms of those processes.

There is at least one common base upon which programs of career education at both the secondary and higher education levels ought to be developed. We simply must assume very little in terms of the previous help that our students have had in satisfying their career development needs. We must then be willing to meet the stated and unstated demands

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of our clientele based on the unique and collective needs which those students bring to the respective institutions which they enter. I cannot help but think back to one of the early reports of the National Advisory Council on Vocational Education when, in a well-developed report, they underscored the following theme: "never before has attention to the needs of the individual as a person been so imperative." I believe that that could be the basic theme for developing career education programs in our respective institutions.

A final observation on commonalities, before examining specific roles of institutions, refers to a basic need for faculty and staff inservice. Career education, in spite of models, plans, and legislation, will not happen until we have a faculty and staff that has some kind of real commitment to career education. Administrators need to have an informed commitment that includes a set of priorities that places career education at, or near the top, based on a real understanding of what career education is all about. Unless we have that, programs will be brushed aside as soon as budgets tighten or when programs falter in one way or other. Faculty need to believe in the importance of their efforts in helping students deal with career development tasks and with career planning activities. Especially where infusion and concept integration is the approach to curriculum development, we must have faculty who are sufficiently committed to allow them to be pried away from some traditional subject-matter content and emphases and to have them respond to spontaneous opportunities to incorporate a career education emphasis into their teaching. (9) Inservice programs must be well-planned and well-executed to accomplish that.

The Secondary School Level

The secondary school as an institution has some complexities not too unlike many higher education institutions. A large number of courses, often heavily department controlled, characterizes the curricula. These complexities make program implementation somewhat more difficult than at the primary, elementary, and middle-school levels; yet the need for program implementation may be greater.

The high school is the end-of-the-line for many students. Even if the Carnegie Commission estimate of 67% of graduating seniors going on to education beyond high school by the year 2,000 is reached, (1) the 33% who do not go on and the 20% who drop out before graduation are in real need of help. Unless assistance is provided in the high school program, the help that is so badly needed might never be provided.

It is also at this level of education where the reality of the first job choice is tested--where the measure of the career decision (or the lack of one) has its impact. There is an accountability present at this level that gives to program development a dimension that is not always very comfortable. That is, it is much easier to deal with the more general needs and developments of students for which there is less specific accountability: we may never really know how many of our graduates and school leavers become "good citizens," but we will know if their job choices and subsequent preparation have been poorly conceived and whether their career placement has been erroneous.

The high school should look at every student as having a career goal and in need of help with career planning. Often those students who have stated plans to go on to education beyond high school are treated as if they have no career goals--that is a fallacy that Gysbers refers to as dangerous. (1) All students need help with career exploration, planning, and decision-making; and some will need immediate preparation opportunities.

My discussion of high school implementation activities will be brief. I believe that in many respects they will be somewhat self-explanatory. I would identify these as being important in the high school program of career education:

1) Career guidance and counseling provided on an individual and group basis. Classroom instruction should augment these efforts; counselors and teachers should feel part of team working toward common objectives.

2) Job information provided a means to an end and not an end in itself. Classroom instruction should support efforts to make job information valuable for students and should enhance student utilization of available information.

3) Opportunities for career exploration are made readily available. This can and should be done in a variety of ways: through those courses which lend themselves to exploration in specific fields and through special classes dealing with exploration. Simulations, hands-on experiences, and directed work experience should be part of this activity.

4) Job preparation opportunities that are bigger, better, more extensive, and more intensive than is often found in traditional vocational education programs are available to all students. There is a need for breadth in the educational experiences of every student, but there also is a need for enough specificity in the preparation of those who will enter the labor market upon graduation for them to achieve some measure of success in their immediate job goals. Individualized instruction may be a necessity here.

5) Cooperative education experiences are provided in more disciplines with more variations so as to reach more students than is traditionally the case.

6) Placement services are available as part of the total program, especially for those who enter the world of work upon leaving high school. This help, provided by trained specialists and assisted by concerned faculty, will be an increasingly important part of the secondary school program.

7) The career education model being implemented in the particular state or area in which the institution operates should be related to. The high school should pick up the ball where the middle school leaves off, or help the middle school acknowledge and fulfill its role. A total career education program in the district of which it is a part should be encouraged.

8) Realistic and relevant learning opportunities should be provided for early school leavers to help them avoid becoming an immediate part of the ranks of the unemployed or underemployed.

9) Throughout all of the activities identified with career education, attempts should be made to foster those career development tasks which are characteristic of high school-aged youth. These developmental tasks are perhaps best represented in those presented by Dr. L. Sunny Hansen (5) as somewhat of a composite of tasks identified by several career developmental theorists; they are:

The Senior High School Years:

1. Reality testing of self-concept.

2. Awareness of preferred life style.

3. Reformulation of tentative career goals.

4. Increasing knowledge of an experience in jobs and work settings.

5. Acquiring knowledge of educational and occupational paths.

6. Clarify decision making process (related to self).

7. Commitment with tentativeness within a changing world.

The concepts, goals and objectives which give direction to program activities at the high school level should lead toward the attainment of a total program. The program should reach out to all students and provide the assistance needed with a variety of tasks related to the ultimate attainment of success in a chosen career and self-fulfillment as a person.

The Higher Education Level

It has been suggested by many critics that little has been done regarding career education at the higher education level. In the process of developing a model for career education in higher education this summer, (10) and in developing an annotated bibliography to accompany that model, my students and I discovered that perhaps more has been done (and written about what has been done) than at first may appear to be the case. As is true with much of our activity in career education, however, there is not a great deal of visibility in many of those activities. When seen in isolation from others, some activities may appear at best to be meager attempts at providing career education. Those who would criticize higher education for doing little can find much to support their stand.

Before presenting the components of the model which was developed this summer, and before presenting the developmental tasks for higher-education-aged youth, it might be appropriate to review some statements and criticisms made by several writers who looked at career education and higher education.

Hoyt (6) perhaps lays out the most pervasive of the challenges for higher education when he addressed six rather specific concerns for higher education. These are as follows:

1) undergraduate teacher education programs must be invested with a career education emphasis,

2) counselor education programs need to be greatly revised,

3) prospective educational administrators must have an emphasis, which is now missing, on career education as part of their formal education,

4) teacher education institutions must assume responsibility for solving the need for support personnel,

5) research and evaluation efforts must be directed toward career education, and

6) higher education institutions must join with State Departments of Education in providing inservice education to help solve the massive problems of teacher re-training that career education will bring.

Fite, President of Eastern Illinois University, (1) suggests that university preparation programs be broadened in terms of providing assistance for students who need to re-think and clarify their career goals. He suggests that one of the key issues that colleges and universities face is the reassessment of the nature of the goals and objectives formed by students. He cites a need, at the doctoral level in particular, for students to be made aware of "alternative and satisfying employment opportunities" rather than concentrating almost exclusively on teaching as a career.

Kerr, (1) former chairman of the Carnegie Commission, points out that the college degree may force the student to get more education than some of them need and want. He also speaks to the issue of working with the student who "stops out" and suggests we consider the act to be positive (as compared to referring to the student as a "dropout.") He further suggests that we might actually encourage students to take time off between high school and college, or between the lower division and upper division of college, or between college and graduate school.

The basic message that seems to come through from comments such as those just cited is that of meeting students' needs that have not been met before and doing it through non-traditional methods if necessary. Career education, at any level of education, seems to suggest innovation; there does not appear to be a one-model box for career education at any level--fortunately! Flexible programs, which can be designed to meet student needs, should be part of our curricula.

Hansen, (5) in presenting composite developmental tasks for career development, carries those tasks up into the level beyond high school. The developmental tasks appropriate for post-high school youth, as suggested by Hansen and her colleagues, are as follows:

The Post High School Years:

1. Develop interpersonal skills essential to work.

2. Develop information-processing skills about self and work.

3. Reintegration of the self.

4. Acquiring a sense of community.

5. Commitment to a concept of career.

6. Acquiring the determination to participate in change.

Any model for career education in higher education is likely to have in it elements and components similar to those found in other models which address primarily the K-12 schools. Such is true of the model which was developed this summer during my work at the University of Wisconsin-Madison while serving as a Visiting Professor of Educational Administration. Students from a technical institute and a four-year liberal arts college level worked with me in developing the model. The model has not been tried out and tested; it was developed, however, after a diligent study of career education foundations, theory, models, and practices. The model took on some practical significance when through field research at least one activity was identified in each component in institutions at each of three levels of higher education: a technical institute (community college equivalent), a liberal arts college, and a four year-plus university. The components of that model, and characteristics identified for each, are as follows: (10)

1. Faculty-Staff In-Service.

   a. Faculty-staff involvement in planning and conducting programs.
   b. Aim at developing understandings and competencies needed by faculty and staff.
   c. Utilize formal and informal activities.
   d. Be longitudinal and sequential in the planned activity.

2. Counseling and Guidance.

   a. Involve counseling specialists and faculty.
   b. Provide for objective analysis data for use in career planning and decision-making.
   c. Provide labor market and job demand information.
   d. Provide a variety of career development activities, formal and informal.

3. Field Experience In World of Work.

   a. Directed and supervised by prepared faculty.
   b. Educational benefit is drawn from the experience.
   c. Job observation and exploration opportunities are provided.
   d. Experiences in the world of work are provided at the point of student readiness.

4. Instructional Program.

   a. Variety of activities in courses throughout the curriculum.
   b. Faculty informed about career education and the career relevance of their courses.
   c. Courses deal with one or more aspects of career development, planning, and decision-making in each college or department.

d. Deals with development of personal skills and attributes which lead to job success.
e. Values and attitudes important to career decision-making are treated.
f. Career awareness and occupational explorations are facilitated in many courses.
g. Courses are upgraded based on feedback from students and the employing community.
h. Faculty draw on community resources to supplement and enhance their knowledge of careers.

5. Placement Services.

a. All faculty involved in addition to specialized placement personnel.
b. Provides up-to-date information on job openings.
c. Is a continuing service to students and graduates.
d. Provides accurate and timely descriptions of jobs available.
e. Provides help for students in terms of techniques for seeking and obtaining a job.
f. Cultivates relationships with the employing community to provide greater accessibility for students.

6. Community Involvement.

a. Close and constant attention on the part of faculty and staff.
b. Provides for input by future employers and students through special committees.
c. Requires fact-finding groundwork and the development of relationships with the community power structure.
d. Community is considered as an extension of the school and classroom and as a valuable source of information.
e. Mutual respect becomes the basis for two-way communication.

7. Evaluation.

a. Internal and external evaluations are provided.
b. Faculty, staff and students are involved in assessing and evaluating programs.
c. Evaluation data is communicated to program participants so that upgrading and revision activities can be undertaken.
d. Evaluation is seen as a positive and constructive activity aimed at improvement.

Education beyond high school must reach both young people and adults; job entry and re-entry programs are necessary. (2) Stated missions of community colleges and technical institutes appear to relate especially well to career education, (3) but there is much for all to improve upon as career education programs are implemented. Our liberal arts colleges and our universities will find new challenges in dealing with students and their career development needs. We must also prepare teachers and business-community leaders with an understanding of career education that will help them to take their respective places in the total program of career education.

Summary

The roles of the secondary and higher education institutions are somewhat unique in career education, and yet they deal with many of the same basic concerns and needs that are prevalent throughout the entire spectrum of the career education concept. Dealing with students as individuals who have stated and unstated career development needs is basic to program development in any institution.

Where a complete program of career education has been or is being implemented, the high school or higher education institution must coordinate and articulate its program with other schools. Where other program elements are not developed, the mandate to serve students in their identified stages of development is particularly keen Assuming too much about the career development and planning done by students is a danger that must be avoided.

Institutions of higher education must re-examine their own unique roles in light of the purposes of their institutions. Technical colleges and community colleges have missions that appear to lend themselves particularly well to many aspects of career education; yet, often program components important to career development are missing in those institutions. Liberal arts colleges, often faced with a dichotomy that has formed between liberal arts and vocational preparation, must find new ways of gaining acceptance of career education within their faculties and programs. Universities, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, will do well to re-examine their curricula and student services to determine the extent to which career education needs are being met.

All institutions can improve their programs in light of career education models, and students will benefit from those efforts. The case for doing a better job with career education rests on the goals of those students who come to our institutions with needs that have too long gone unmet.

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